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UNDP: MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

Implementation of the successor programming arrangements

Note by the Administrator

I. PURPOSE

1. The present report has been prepared in response to Executive Board decision 96/7, in which the Board requested the Administrator to submit operational guidelines on the new programming arrangements, including arrangements for the review reports that will enable the Board to review the actual implementation of the country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) and the lessons learned.

2. With reference to the table contained in Executive Board decision 95/23, the report provides summaries of guidelines for country-level programming (lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2); resources for development in countries in special situations (line 1.1.3); regional programming (line 1.2); global interregional and special activities (line 1.3); and programme support to the resident coordinator/aid coordination (line 3.1). Each summary also indicates briefly the arrangements for overall monitoring and reporting to the Board on the implementation of the line.

3. Detailed guidelines on the programming of these facilities are provided in the Manual for the Programming of UNDP Resources.

II. COUNTRY-LEVEL PROGRAMMING (LINES 1.1.1 AND 1.1.2)

4. The basic guidelines for country-level programming (lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2) under the new programming arrangements were introduced to the Executive Board at its first regular session 1996 as part of document DP/1996/3. At that meeting, the Administrator noted that, in principle, the

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guidelines were to be viewed as a "live" document that would be improved upon with time, based on country-level experience in the implementation of the guidelines and, as necessary, additional guidance from the Board. In this light, the draft guidelines introduced to the Board in January 1996 have since been duly updated, taking into account the main issues raised by members during that session, clarifications provided by the Administrator thereon, the consequent Board decision 96/7, as well as feedback from the UNDP network of country offices. In particular, country offices have been able to provide feedback during a series of high-level meetings of resident representatives undertaken in early 1996: in the Africa region (Burkina Faso, January); in the Asia and the Pacific region (India, February); in the Latin America and Caribbean region (Mexico, March); and in the Arab States region (Djibouti, March).

5. The main features in the updated guidelines include:

(a) Reaffirmation of the fundamental principle that programming of UNDP and UNDP-managed resources should be based on national plans and priorities, and that the preparation of the CCF is the responsibility of the Government, in consultation with UNDP;

(b) The advisory note 1/ is an internal UNDP document, prepared by the resident representative with necessary support from UNDP headquarters, in particular the substantive units of the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support (BPPS). In preparing the advisory note, the resident representative is encouraged to undertake dialogue on the country's development circumstances and prospects with traditional partners (e.g., government ministries) as well as non-traditional partners (civil society organizations). In all instances, this dialogue is to be undertaken with the full knowledge of the national authorities;

(c) The draft CCF will be reviewed by the local Programme Advisory Committee (LPAC) before submission to UNDP headquarters and the Executive Board for approval or discussion, in accordance with decision paragraph 6 of decision 96/7. With government concurrence, multilateral, bilateral and civil society organizations will be invited to the local CCF review. This arrangement creates possibilities for the early participation of members of the Board through their local missions in the Government-led elaboration of the CCF;

(d) The structure of the CCF has been streamlined and will cover, consistent with paragraph 5 of decision 96/7, an analysis of the development situation from the sustainable human development (SHD) perspective, results and lessons of past cooperation, strategy and programme areas for the next

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1/ After due consideration, UNDP has decided to revert to the term "advisory note", rather than use the term "preliminary programme note", which had been proposed in document DP/1996/3 of 30 November 1995, presented to the Executive Board at its first regular session 1996.

cooperation and management arrangements (execution/implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting and resource mobilization);

(e) Recipient countries will be assigned 60 per cent of base country-level target resource allocation from the core (line 1.1.1) resources upon approval of the CCF by the Executive Board. Assignments in excess of this amount (from line 1.1.2) will be made based on established criteria (see document DP/1996/3), taking into account Executive Board directives on the minimum share of resource flows to least developed countries and low-income countries;

(f) In order to capture the diversity of the country experiences under which UNDP operates, the guidelines are meant to be applied flexibly.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

6. Regular monitoring of the implementation of overall CCFs will be undertaken in two ways:

(a) By the director of the regional bureau concerned, supported by the Bureau Programme Advisory Committee (BPAC). This will be undertaken as part of the annual review of overall country office plans, including results and benchmarks. The annual reviews will result in the assignment of additional resources under line 1.1.2, as appropriate. The director of the bureau will report to the Administrator and the Programme Management Oversight Committee (PMOC) on implementation of CCFs in general and the allocation of line 1.1.2 resources in the bureau. The latter will also be reflected in the annual report of the Administrator to the Executive Board, as indicated in paragraph 29 of document DP/1996/3;

(b) By UNDP and the Government. This will form part of the biennial review of UNDP operational activities at the country level. A report of each review will be made available to the Executive Board with overviews prepared on a regional basis, covering the substantive and thematic achievements and main lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation.

7. Detailed guidelines on the programming and management of lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 are contained in the manual.

III. PROGRAMMING IN COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT SITUATIONS (LINE 1.1.3)

8. In line with Executive Board decision 95/23, 5 per cent of UNDP core resources have been set aside for development activities in countries facing special situations (line 1.1.3). The provision incorporates support provided under the category of disaster mitigation during the fifth cycle and enables UNDP to respond in a timely and systematic manner to emergency situations that previously had to be brought to the Executive Board for ad hoc action (see paragraph 54 of DP/1995/32).

9. The interventions by external partners in countries experiencing various stages of crisis require strengthened strategic alliances among, inter alia,

international financial institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and national authorities, including civil society. In this light, UNDP will use line 1.1.3 resources to provide three forms of support:

(a) The formulation of strategic frameworks for international/national action in countries experiencing or emerging from crisis situations, and the launching of specific programme initiatives in response to development opportunities;

(b) Enhancing country/United Nations system ability to coordinate the response to sudden, life-threatening crises;

(c) Building national capacities to prepare for, avoid and manage complex emergencies and disasters.

10. Funds targeted for category (a) will be allocated by the Administrator, based on the recommendation of PMOC, with the participation of the Emergency Response Division (ERD) of the Office for United Nations Support Services (OUNS). In category (b) the resident coordinator/resident representative has the standing authority to approve an allocation of up to $200,000 from global emergency funds to be used in accordance with established criteria. Universally accessible funds for category (c) will be approved by the regional bureau director, in close consultation with ERD.

11. At the country level, UNDP will pursue its objectives in support of countries in special situations in consultation with the United Nations Country Team, the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) or similar inter-agency coordination mechanism. Normally, UNDMT, chaired by the resident coordinator (in accordance with paragraph 39 of General Assembly resolution 46/182), includes the country representatives of all United Nations organizations and serves as the United Nations system mechanism for crisis or disaster management.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

12. Regular monitoring of activities under 1.1.3 will be carried out by the regional bureaux and ERD based on standard UNDP procedures and in full coordination with the Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning. In the third year, a formal evaluation of the line will be undertaken. The main conclusions, lessons and recommendations as well as arrangements for their incorporation in future programmes will be reported on to the Executive Board in 1999, and the full report of the evaluation will be made available to the Board at the same session.

13. Details on the programming and management of line 1.2 are contained in the manual.

IV. REGIONAL PROGRAMMING (LINE 1.2)

14. Under Executive Board decision 95/23, 7.6 per cent of UNDP core resources have been earmarked for regional programming activities (line 1.2).

A regional cooperation framework (RCF) (akin to the CCF) will comprise the central document in the regional programming process. It will provide the basis upon which the Executive Board will review the regional strategy, programme proposals and resource requirements and, through its approval, establish the basis for assigning resources for regional programme formulation.

15. To ensure that the regional programme is clearly focused and has a strong degree of ownership on the part of participating Governments, the director of the regional bureau concerned will undertake extensive consultations with Governments, regional institutions and relevant United Nations specialized agencies.

16. The preparation of the regional programme will take into account the measures contained in the agreement reached between the Administrator and the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Economic Commissions in February 1995. Those measures include: improved mechanisms for regional-level coordination; mechanisms to encourage policy analysis and the identification of specific areas of cooperation; the incorporation of regional dimensions into country strategy notes; mechanisms for the two-way exchange of information; joint review of execution/operational modalities for regional programmes; and mechanisms for collaboration on resource mobilization strategies.

17. The RCF should be conceived and developed as both a strategy and a statement of understanding between Governments, regional institutions and UNDP on the main regional development challenges facing the countries within the region, the overall strategy and programme areas for UNDP cooperation, and management arrangements in the coming period.

18. The RCF document will provide the following information:

(a) Introduction. A brief factual statement will be presented on the consultative process that culminated in the RCF document, highlighting the significant role of Governments and regional institutions in the process;

(b) Section I: Development situation from an SHD perspective. This will contain an analysis of the main development goals and priorities of the region, as jointly understood, in relation but not limited to the focus areas of SHD, i.e., issues pertaining to poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods, gender, sustainable environment and governance, from a regional context; the analysis must be dynamic and forward-looking, addressing underlying causes and trends, and drawing, as relevant, on recent United Nations-sponsored international agreements to which the Governments in the region are committed, such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD), and the United Nations World Conference on Women (FWCW);

(c) Section II: Results and lessons of past cooperation. This part will show the main cumulative results of the current regional programme, highlighting those areas where UNDP comparative advantages have had significant impact in supporting regional efforts; the extent to which regional capacity-building has taken place and is being sustained, in terms of

improved decision-making systems and the capacity to conceive, plan, deliver and sustain services; the impact of UNDP-assisted regional activities on the poor, women, environment and employment-generation; and the main lessons learned by Governments and UNDP from the monitoring and evaluation of the current regional programme;

(d) Section III: Strategy and programme areas for next cooperation. This will present the agreed overall strategy for the most effective use of the regional resources and services available from UNDP, based on region-specific circumstances and in line with UNDP mandates and comparative advantages. It will be linked to the analysis in section I and main lessons learned from past cooperation in section II and will give brief descriptions of main programme areas for which UNDP cooperation is envisaged, taking into account the linkages with national and global programmes and the added value of approaching the programme area from a regional vantage point;

(e) Section IV: Management arrangements. This will give details of: execution and implementation; monitoring, evaluation and reporting; and resource mobilization.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

19. Regular monitoring of regional activities under line 1.2 will be undertaken through annual reviews by the director of the regional bureau concerned, based on pre-determined criteria for results and benchmarks, with a formal evaluation of the facility in its third year. The main conclusions, lessons and recommendations as well as arrangements for their incorporation in future programmes will be reported to the Executive Board in 1999. The full report of the evaluation will also be made available to the Board.

20. Details on programming and management of line 1.1.3 are contained in the manual.

V. GLOBAL, INTERREGIONAL AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES (LINE 1.3)

21. Under decision 95/23, the previous (i.e., fifth cycle) global, interregional and special activities were merged into one line (1.3) and assigned 4.2 per cent of UNDP core resources. As spelled out in document DP/1995/32, line 1.3, referred to here as the global programme, is intended to promote interregional and global partnerships, to support global-level research to promote SHD, to expand and test new concepts and tools to support SHD as well as to support countries in meeting national commitments to programmes of action established by United Nations Conferences since 1990.

22. Equally important, the global programme will be developed in close collaboration with country-level programming lines (1.1.1 and 1.1.2) and regional programmes (line 1.2). This will enable the organization to operate within the same broad general policy framework; avoid duplication of efforts; maximize impact; direct its research, policy and programme support to priority areas in programme countries; and, at the same time, bring the experiences gained to the global level.

23. The global programme will focus on five priority areas, each with a strategic and research dimension:

(a) Macro-policies to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable human development. Programmes will promote multidisciplinary approaches to development. Examples of proposed areas of intervention include: people-centred macro-frameworks; poverty, environment and gender indicators; and national capacity development strategies;

(b) Poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods. Programmes will help to fulfil the mandates of the World Summit for Social Development. Examples of proposed areas of intervention include: poverty definitions, assessment and monitoring techniques, including for the gender dimensions of poverty; assessment of existing social programmes and development of innovative approaches and funding mechanisms; understanding and promotion of sustainable livelihoods and methodologies to support employment programmes; promotion of innovative, environmentally sound and appropriate technology that contributes to poverty eradication; and health issues, in particular poverty-related diseases and the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome;

(c) Environment, natural resource management and energy. Programmes will respond to the UNCED mandates, and all are directly related to poverty eradication. Examples of proposed areas of intervention include: sustainable agriculture and food security; economics of sustainable development; forestry and land degradation; water strategies; and sustainable energy services, particularly in rural areas;

(d) Advancement of women and gender equality. Programmes will help to implement the mandates of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Examples of proposed areas of intervention include: methodologies to strengthen country capacity to integrate gender-disaggregated data and analysis into policy frameworks and legislation; and models and pilot programmes for gender-mainstreaming;

(e) Management development and governance. Programmes will respond to WSSD concerns and/or are linked to Habitat II. Examples of proposed interventions include: models of national and regional strategies for sound governance; innovative practices of local-level government and national decentralization programmes; aid management and accountability; and urban management strategies.

24. In the course of 1996, UNDP will develop a "global cooperation framework" (GCF), which will elaborate on the areas of intervention proposed above. The GCF will address the following: (a) the rationale for UNDP work in a given thematic area; (b) lessons drawn from past cooperation; (c) objectives; (d) main activities; (e) expected outputs and impact; (f) execution/implementation modalities; (g) estimated resources available; and (h) possible linkages to regional and country programmes. As in the past, funding for Human Development Report activities and the contingency fund for unanticipated programme opportunities will be obligated at the discretion of the Administrator. It is expected that up to 70 per cent of the resources of the global programme will be allocated at the beginning of the three-year

period, 1997-1999. The remainder will be kept in reserve to support high-quality programmes as well as new ideas and emerging issues within the priority areas.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

25. Regular monitoring will be in the form of annual reviews of activities in each priority area or sub-line by the director of BPPS, based on pre-determined criteria for results and benchmarks, and a formal evaluation of the facility in its third year. The main conclusions, lessons and recommendations as well as arrangements for their incorporation in future programmes will be reported on to the Executive Board in 1999. The full report of the evaluation will also be made available to the Board.

26. Details on programming and management of line 1.3 are contained in the manual.

VI. SUPPORT TO THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR SYSTEM (LINE 3.1)

27. In line with Executive Board decision 95/23, UNDP has earmarked 1.7 per cent of its core resources for support to the resident coordinator system. In principle, the responsibility for coordinating all types of external assistance, including that provided by the United Nations system, lies with the Government. The resident coordinator system, under the leadership of the resident coordinator, seeks to facilitate the exercise of this responsibility by the Government. The specific role of UNDP with respect to the resident coordinator system was established, inter alia, in General Assembly resolutions 32/197, 34/213, 47/199 and 48/209 and 48/162.)

28. The programme of support to the resident coordinator allows resident coordinators to respond quickly and effectively to opportunities for United Nations system collaboration and act as a catalyst in the development and strengthening of coordination initiatives at the country level. In developing these initiatives, the resident coordinator will necessarily involve the entire United Nations development system, including agencies that do not have formal representation in that particular country.

29. The programme will be used to support five areas of coordination:

(a) Collaborative programming: will assist Governments in the preparation and implementation of the country strategy note, when the Government so decides; support thematic/field-level committees that have been established for the purposes stated in paragraph 40 of General Assembly resolution 47/199 and paragraph 41 of resolution 50/120;

(b) Follow-up to major international conferences: will facilitate, in full consultation with Governments, coherent and coordinated United Nations follow-up to major international conferences at the country level (paragraph 39 of General Assembly resolution 50/120);

(c) United Nations system public information activities: will promote a better understanding of the objectives, themes and initiatives of the United

Nations and show how the United Nations development system, working in a coherent and coordinated manner, is assisting Governments in achieving national priorities;

(d) United Nations system shared services and common premises: will provide support for efforts towards an integrated and more cost-effective common United Nations system presence at the country-level, such as shared administrative systems, common premises, integrated databases and communication systems and inter-agency training (General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120);

(e) Special assignments: will provide support for special initiatives such as the United Nations/UNDP assistance in democratization processes e.g., national elections.

30. The assignment of resources under line 3.1 will be made each year in two stages:

(a) Initial assignment: representing 75 per cent of available resources under line 3.1, to be allocated to all resident coordinators in lump sum at the beginning of the year;

(b) Subsequent assignment: representing 25 per cent of available resources, allocated to resident coordinators to supplement initial assignment, based on a specific request.

31. Line 3.1 will be managed by the Administrator. In support of this function, OUNS will (a) develop criteria, guidelines and procedures for the use of the fund; (b) review requests for additional funding; (c) participate in relevant inter-agency headquarters coordination mechanisms; and (d) disseminate best-practice experiences or lessons learned from the monitoring and evaluation of activities under line 3.1.

32. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Regular monitoring of line 3.1 will be done through the current mechanism of the annual report of the Resident Coordinator, which will be modified accordingly to emphasize results and benchmarks. A formal evaluation of the resident coordinator system will be undertaken in early 1999 and reported to the Executive Board.

33. Details on programming and management of line 3.1 are contained in the manual.

VII. PROGRAMME REVIEW AND SUPPORT SYSTEM

34. In its decision 96/7, the Executive Board also requested the Administrator to submit a proposed format and timing for review reports, based on information generated from the new programme review and monitoring system. In general, biennial reports reflecting the outcomes of joint Government/UNDP reviews of progress in implementing CCFs will be made available to the Board. The reports will specify results achieved against benchmarks established in programme documents. In addition, ad hoc reports on evaluation of the main

themes of UNDP assistance will be made available to the Board as and when they are undertaken.

35. Details of the programme review and support system are contained in the manual. A schedule of the periodic review reports to the Executive Board on country and intercountry programmes and the resident coordinator system, including the proposed format, will be made available to the Board at its first regular session 1997 (see annex).

VIII. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

35. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Take note of the present report and, in particular, the guidelines on programming at the country level (lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2), resources for development in countries in special situations (1.1.3), regional (1.2), global, interregional and special activities (1.3) and support to the resident coordinator/aid coordination (3.1), and the basic review and reporting arrangements;

2. Provide additional guidance on its expectations with respect to the basic review and reporting mechanisms.

Annex

REPORTING

1. Two types of reports will be made available to the Executive Board: biennial country reports and thematic evaluation reports.

Biennial country reports

2. Biennial country reports will reflect the outcome of in-depth, joint Government/UNDP, country-level reviews. Each report will provide an assessment of the progress made in implementing the country cooperation framework (CCF) and the degree of achievement at the level of targets and indicators set for programmes and projects. The reports will also comment on management arrangements, as well as collaboration within the United Nations system and with other donors. A summary of resource mobilization target planned to what was achieved. The reports will be structured as follows:

(a) Section 1: Introduction. This section will provide an overview of the development situation;

(b) Section 2: Implementation of CCF. This section will discuss problems encountered and progress made; Government/national commitment; and management issues, including key difficulties encountered and proposals for solution;

(c) Section 3: Programmes and projects. This section will contain a list of programmes approved, with a short brief on objectives, targets set and goals reached; any reorientation envisaged; and any evaluation/audit findings;

(d) Section 4: United Nations system and coordination issues. This section will discuss key results of aid coordination and compare resources mobilization targets planned to those reached;

(e) Section 5: Conclusions and recommendations. This section will list the key outcomes of the review, together with any recommendations of the Administrator;

(f) Annex. The annex will provide a summary of resource mobilization results.

3. Each report will not exceed five pages in length and will be made available to the Executive Board for information purposes. A report may be discussed, provided more than five members make a request to the secretariat to do so (same practice as for CCF).

Thematic reports

4. In addition, reports on evaluations of the main themes of UNDP assistance will be made available to the Executive Board periodically. Such reports will be prepared in accordance with UNDP established guidelines for monitoring and evaluation. They will focus on issues of substance and process. They will provide quantitative and qualitative assessments of

performance, impact, capacity-building and sustainability, based on benchmarks and targets set out in programme and project documents.